

EARLY LIFE
OF THE LATE
F. W. FABER, D.D.

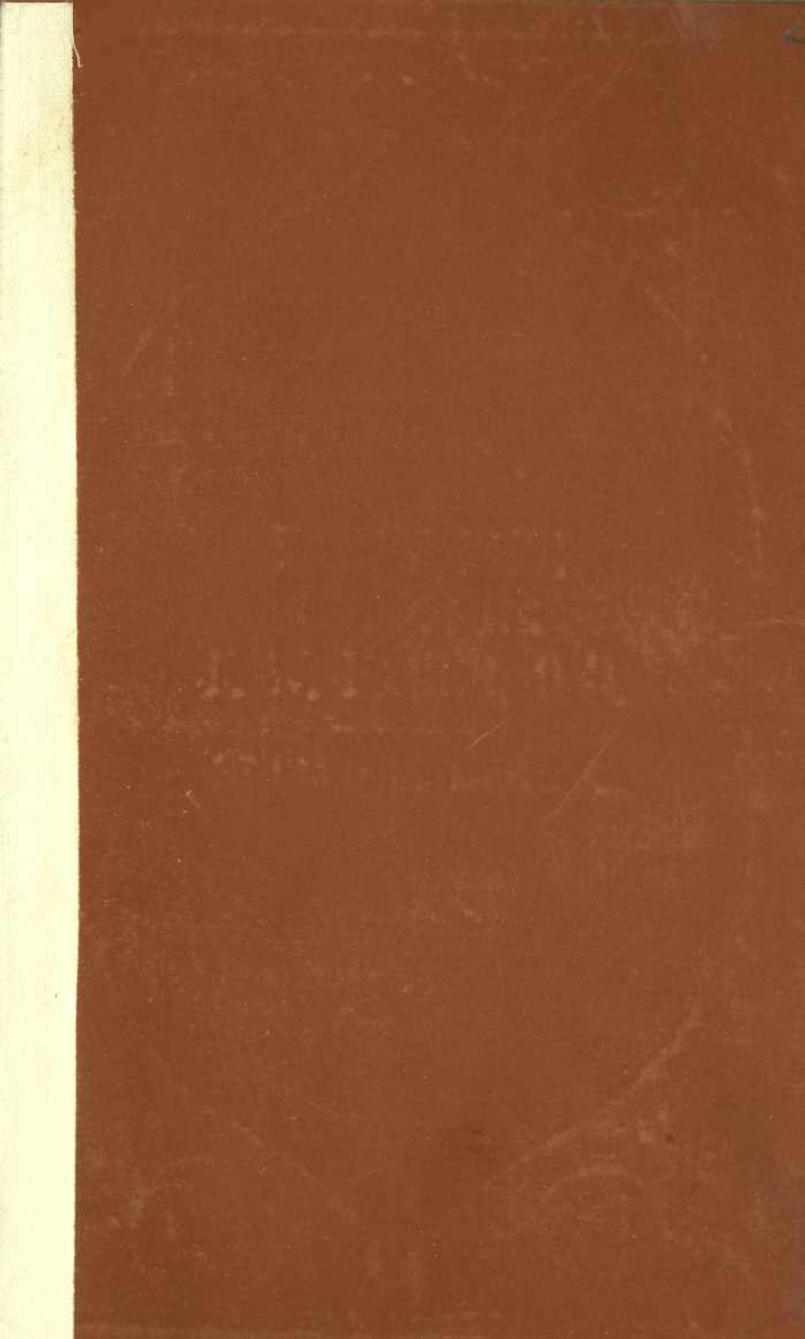
BY HIS ONLY BROTHER.

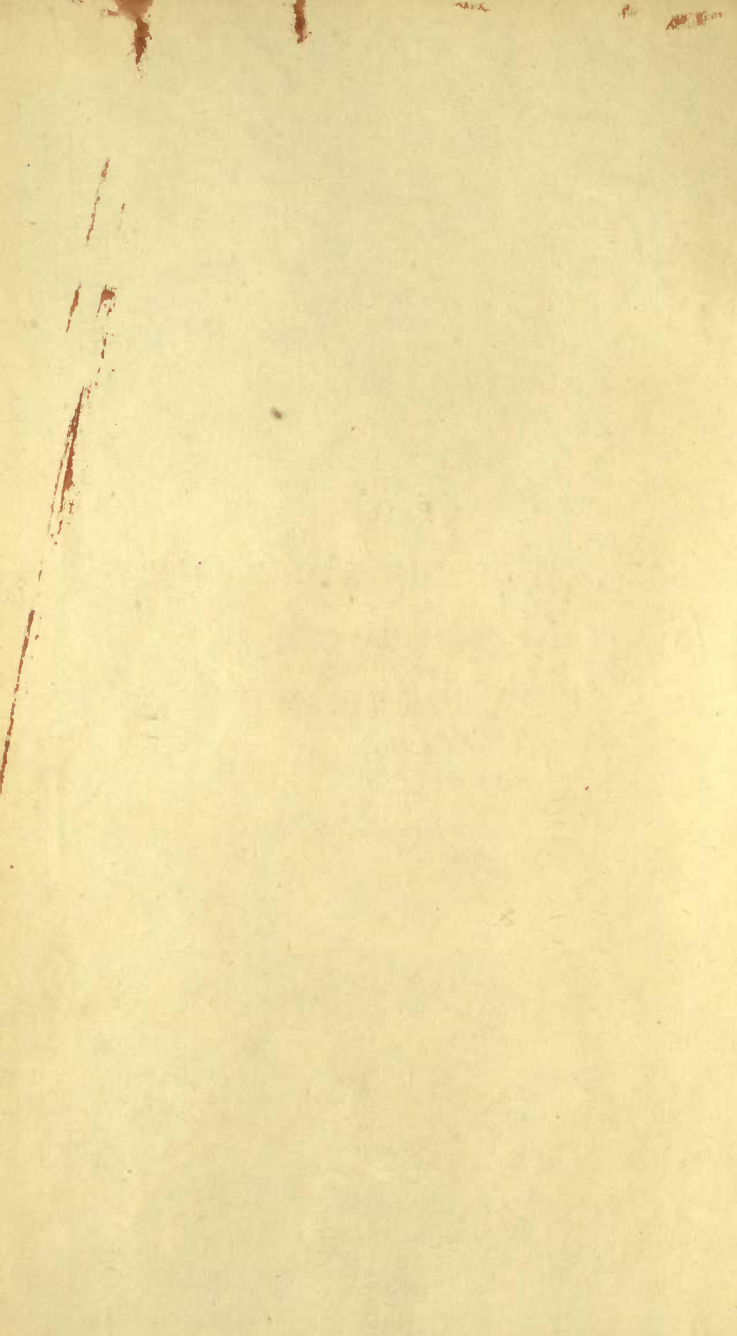
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A BRIEF
SKETCH OF THE EARLY LIFE
OF THE LATE
F. W. FABER, D.D.

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BRIEF
SKETCH OF THE EARLY LIFE

OF THE LATE

F. W. FABER, D.D.

Faber, Francis Atkinson
BY

HIS ONLY SURVIVING BROTHER.

"Such a holy witch,
That he enchants societies unto him:
Half all men's hearts are his."

122678 Cymbeline.

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RECORD OF THE EARLY LIFE

1841-1842

T. W. KILMER, D.D.

AND OF HIS EARLY LIFE

1841-1842

1841-1842

1841-1842

1841-1842

1841-1842

PREFACE.

Being the only person now alive who can give any information as to the youth of Father Faber, I wrote a brief sketch, in the hope that my friend, Father Bowden, might prefix it to his own memoir. Accordingly, I sent the MS. to him, but he could not use it in the manner intended; and hence its appearance as a separate publication, although of the shortest kind.

I am glad to have an opportunity of noticing one sentence in Father Bowden's very interesting book, which

relates to my brother's funeral, and runs as follows: "It was noticed that, as in life he had left his own people to obey the call of God, so in the whole crowd of mourners around his coffin, there was not one who was connected with him by ties of blood." This might lead readers who know nothing of the affection which existed between my brother and his relations, to suppose that he was neglected when dead because he had quitted their communion when living. Nothing can be further from the truth; and it was necessity alone that prevented his nearest kin from being present. Of his three brothers, one was already dead; the second (myself) prostrated by illness; and the third absent in India. Had it been otherwise, there would have been no lack of attendance. It is right to add that Father Bowden had no inten-

tion whatever of implying any want of affection on our part. He knew too well the relations that existed between us; but it may be otherwise with those who knew nothing.

FRANCIS A. FABER.

Saunderton Rectory.

A BRIEF
SKETCH OF THE EARLY LIFE
OF THE LATE
F. W. FABER, D.D.

FREDERIC WILLIAM FABER was born on the 28th of June, 1814, in the vicarage of Calverley, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, of which place his grandfather, the Rev. Thomas Faber, was the incumbent. The same dwelling, about forty years before, had been the birthplace of his uncle, George Stanley Faber, a name long and well known in theological literature. His paternal great-grandmother was Margaret de Dibon, (married to the Rev. David Traviss,) who was herself the granddaughter of Henri de Dibon, a gentleman resident in the Isle of France, who

fled to England with his family when the Edict of Nantz was revoked by Louis XIV. Previous to his departure, he had buried his Bible in the garden attached to his house; but contrived to regain it, and it is now in the possession of Charles Waring Faber, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, his father's representative, having been passed down as an heirloom through the eldest branch of the family ever since the time of its original possessor.

In the August following his birth, he was baptized in the parish church; and it is a little singular that St. Wilfrid was the patron saint of the edifice; a circumstance he was unaware of when he quitted the English Communion and was re-baptized by that name.

His birthplace, however, had no claim upon his memory, for in the following December his father, Thomas Henry Faber, was appointed secretary to Dr. Barrington, Bishop of Durham, and he removed immediately with his family to

Bishop Auckland, where he remained till his death in 1833.

The Bishops of Durham at that time differed much in external splendour from those who have filled the throne of the great northern episcopate, since the Palatine jurisdiction of the County of Durham was severed from the bishoprick, and vested by law in the Crown, in June, 1836. Up to that separation the bishops were Counts Palatine and temporal princes, possessing many of the insignia of royalty. They appointed their own temporal chancellor, who held his courts within the precincts of the Castle at Durham, and whose jurisdiction extended from the Tyne to the Tees. The bishop also had his own attorney and solicitor general, which offices were usually held by the most eminent counsel on the Northern Circuit, the first Lord Abinger, when Mr. Scarlett, being a distinguished name on the list. The Bishop likewise appointed the High Sheriff of the County

Palatine, and his office was usually permanent. This last prerogative is the more remarkable, because in other parts of England the shrievalty emanated immediately from the Crown. All the magistrates, too, of the County Palatine were of the Bishop's nomination, the Lord Lieutenant being powerless in the matter. So were the coroners; and, in short, there was hardly any sort of public patronage which did not rest in his hands.

It was in 1833 that the city of Durham witnessed for the last time the ceremony of opening the court of Summer Assize in the Bishop's name and presence; for though three years elapsed before the privileges of the Palatinate were transferred to the Crown, he was too infirm to be present at any subsequent time. On this occasion, Bishop Van Mildert, then old and feeble, attended, clothed in his episcopal dress, and stood between the late Lord Denman and the junior judge, whilst the ceremony was gone through,

never to be witnessed again by man; for Van Mildert was the last of the Counts Palatine, and "Ichabod" might rightly have been said of the bishoprick from the day when he was laid in the Chapel of the Nine Altars in the Cathedral of Durham.

These circumstances have been dwelt upon somewhat at length, because there is no doubt that they tended to form or strengthen the peculiarities of Frederic's nature. The poem which appeared in his second volume, "On the Death of the last Count Palatine," shews how much his imagination was excited by the splendour which he constantly witnessed; whilst the vicinity of Durham itself, with its feudal castle and grand old Norman Cathedral, was a thing that gave colour to his thoughts and feelings as he grew up in life. The lines "To my Indian Sister" afford a hint of the truth of this observation. Nor was there less attraction for youth in the magnificence of the Bishop's

equipage and retinue; for he always moved from Auckland to Durham in a stately coach with six horses, attended by outriders with holster-pipes for pistols at their saddle-bow; recalling something of the time when travel was dangerous, and the prelates themselves warlike. Then there was the episcopal domain of Auckland Castle, with its beautiful variety of rock, wood, and water. It was then the park of an opulent and powerful prelate, and might remind the spectator of the poet's record of the glories of his own ancestral domain.

“Crowned by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
Stood like Caractacus in act to rally

His host, with broad arms 'gainst the thunder
stroke;

And from beneath his boughs were seen to sally
The dappled foresters: as day awoke,

The branching stag swept down with all his herd,
To quaff a brook which murmured like a bird.”

The herd of deer exists no longer, and a portion of the park has passed into

secular hands ; but the brook, the Gaun-
less, celebrated by Scott in Harold the
Dauntless, still intersects the park from
south to north, and falls into the River
Wear outside the boundary. Such were
the scenes and accessories which greeted
F. W. Faber when he first began to take
notice of things around him.

His mother was his first instructor, and
he exhibited much precocity at a very
early age. He was the very darling of
her heart, and sincerely did he return
her affection ; yet it was perhaps to his
disadvantage that he always seemed to
her to be given in exchange for those
that had been lost, and to form in some
sort the commencement of another family.
In 1813, the year before Frederic's birth,
two children had died on the same day ;
and another followed not long after he
was born. He was the seventh child in a
family of eight ; and the wide space that
existed between him and his surviving
brothers seemed to make his mother cling

more especially to this renovation of her hopes. But it prevented him from having any brothers in the nursery, a thing which would have been advantageous to him in many ways. As it was, there was no one to assert equality with him, and the effect of this was visible in the lines of his earlier character. He had great reliance on himself and his own powers when he was young, and was eager and ardent in a degree which is not common even in childhood. "Quod vult valde vult," might have been predicated of him in his boyish days; and the principle grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength: yet, so far as I had the opportunity of judging of the later years of his life, it had become less apparent as his term was drawing towards its premature close. This peculiarity naturally led to the use of exaggerated forms of expression, whether in talking or writing; which brings to my mind a remark made by one of his best and dearest friends.

Speaking to him on the subject of education, he said, "If I were a schoolmaster, Fred, there is no offence that I should be inclined to punish more severely than the use of *maximus* by a boy, when *magnus* would answer every purpose that he had in view." The fault, however, though it undoubtedly existed, was superficial, and did not affect the depths of his nature.

On the other hand, he possessed in a remarkable degree a quality popular and amiable beyond most others, that perfect candour and openness which concealed nothing; which always made you feel that you were reading the mind as well as gazing on the face of the speaker.

That other causes should have rendered him attractive in society is not to be wondered at; for the gaiety and playfulness of his conversation were remarkable, whilst his temperament was so elastic and buoyant as to leave little room for depression. The "never melancholy" of Wordsworth, which is the crowning point

of his panegyric on his wife, might well have been predicated of my brother. Serious he was, of course, on fitting occasions, but melancholy, I think, never. His whole nature, in short, was a joyous one; and this was hardly impaired either by increasing years or gathering infirmities. It was on his last visit to me, about a year before his death, that he gave us an account of the doings of the Japanese in England, and in his description there was all the overflowing mirth of his earlier days.

I need not detain myself longer from the narrative: because Father Newman, in his remarks on the Eirenicon, has defined the main outlines of his character so touchingly and so truly that no friend could hope to improve upon it.

“*Adde sonum ceræ, Protesilaus cris.*”

To return to early years. I remember when he was still quite a child, a friend desiring to hear him read, and putting a

passage into his hand which contained some hard words. The boy made no attempt to spell them, neither did he avoid them in any way, but charged the difficulty with the resolution of a fox-hunter, making, as may be supposed, strange work with the sesquipedalian words in question. His auditor closed the book laughing heartily, and told him he was the most *intrepid* reader he had ever listened to.

Another nursery story we used to quote against him in after life as a proof that he was not meant to be a *cavalier des dames*. He was overheard, as he expatiated to his sister on the great superiority of the masculine sex; and after laying down his argument in the general, he proceeded to enforce it in the particular. "For example," he said, "if you were the Queen of England, I should still be greater than you, because I am a *man*, and you are only a woman."

Wordsworth says, "the child is father

of the man ;” and perhaps some one may detect in this anecdote a germ of character which could have but one development. Yet this was not altogether the case, as those who are acquainted with his poetry may have remarked on reading “First Love,” and “The Wren of Rothay.” Those verses refer to something real, which came to nothing ; and though I have seen him in after years smile at the recollection, yet I can bear witness that his interest was strong enough in the matter at the time the lines were written.*

* “Erewhile I dreamed of cloistered cells,
Of gloomy courts and matin bells,
And painted windows rare ;
But common life’s less real gleams
Shone warm on my monastic dreams
And melted them to air.

“My captive heart is altered now ;
And had I but one little bough
Of thy green alder-tree,
I would not live too long alone,
Or languish there for want of one
To share the nest with me !”

THE WREN OF ROTHAY.

It must, however, be granted that as he grew up to adolescence he was unlike most young men. He never rejoiced in "horses, dogs, or the grass of the sunny Campus;" yet he rode fairly, and was a most excellent swimmer. Masculine friendships, literature, and in later days travelling,* seemed to supply to him all the interest and pleasure that he needed; and with the single exception above alluded to, he sought for nothing beside.

His first school was the Grammar School of Bishop Auckland, then under the guidance of the Rev. Robert Thompson, who lived to be proud of his scholar. From this he was moved to Kirby Stephen, in Westmoreland, to the house of the

* Whilst still at school, in the summer vacation of 1831, he visited the English Lakes in company with John Merivale, Esq., now one of the Registrars of the Court of Chancery; and in the year following, he went to the Scotch Highlands with John Norton, Esq., who now holds a high legal office at Madras. Both were his Harrow school-fellows.

Rev. John Gibson. This choice of locality was again destined to have effect on his after life ; for it was his first introduction to mountain scenery, which was afterwards one of the greatest pleasures of his existence. The way to it from Bishop Auckland lay by Staindrop and Barnard Castle, and then across the wastes of Stainmore ; all of which places are familiar to the readers of Rokeby, the scene of the poem being laid in the immediate vicinity.

It was not long before his poetic temperament began to evince itself in the usual way, though there was nothing remarkable in his juvenile verses.

Kirby Stephen was always to him a place dear to memory ; but I cannot recal much of his schoolboy life there. One adventure of his, however, I think in all probability occurred at this school. He was caught by a farmer and his wife when trespassing on their premises with some of his youthful comrades. The

farmer seemed disposed to proceed to extremities, when Frederic undertook the defence of the party; and the goodwife soon interposed in their behalf, saying to her husband in the dialect of the country: "Ye *mun* let them gan, maister, the young gentleman has sic a pratty tongue." This faculty certainly never diminished in after times.

In 1825 he was transferred to Shrewsbury School, but for a brief time only; and in the summer of 1827 he went to Harrow, where he remained till he was ready for the University. His connection with Harrow I always thought the turning point for good in his life. He was fortunate in both his masters, but Dr. Butler retired from the school soon after he entered, and it was to his successor, Dr. Longley, that he was mainly indebted for the effect of that powerful influence which a wise master can exercise over the mind of a scholar. I do not think that any pupil of Dr. Arnold ever

regarded his preceptor with more love and veneration than my brother felt for Dr. Longley.

In 1829 he lost his mother, at the early age of 45; and it was the first shadow that fell upon his own life. For the last three years of her existence she had been in feeble health, and her affection and anxiety for the youngest of her sons shewed itself on many occasions in a very touching manner. A relative, one whose name is endeared to us all by the remembrance of lifelong personal kindness, once said to me in speaking of her after her death, "Frederic must surely prosper, for he is the child of his mother's prayers."

For four years longer his father's house was his home; but in 1833 this pleasant place of his boyhood was closed to him by the death of his surviving parent, who had always regarded him with love equal to that of his mother; and who took much delight in watching his opening promise.

From this date he spent his vacations with his eldest brother, the late T. H. Faber, Esq., of Stockton-on-Tees; who was a father to him in every sense of the word, not only by affording him a home, but in the interest he took in all that concerned him. I well remember his delight when Frederic's first volume of poems appeared; how he carried it about with him, and shewed it exultingly to his friends. He was as proud of him, in short, as if he had been his own son; whilst from his sister-in-law he always met with the utmost affection and unfailing kindness. Few who lost such a home as his have been able to repair the loss in such a manner.

He was matriculated at Balliol College, in Act Term, 1832; but did not commence residence till Lent Term, 1833. I doubt whether any undergraduate ever enjoyed Oxford more thoroughly, or felt the *genius loci* so entirely. The beauty of the buildings, especially in summer, when

the groves and gardens are green, was always a source of great delight to him, and the feeling seemed to deepen as he grew older and knew the place better. Readers of his poetry will remember the five sonnets on College Life; College Library; Hall; Garden; and Chapel. And afterwards, when he had become a traveller, his thoughts still went back to his own Argos. Witness the sonnet which is headed "Aged Cities."

"I have known cities with the strong-armed Rhine
Clasping their mouldered quays in lordly sweep;
And lingered where the Maine's low waters
shine
Through Tyrian Frankfort; and been fain to
weep
'Mid the green cliffs where pale Mosella laves
That Roman sepulchre, imperial Trèves.
Ghent boasts her street, and Bruges her moon-
light square;
And holy Mechlin, Rome of Flanders, stands
Like a queen mother, on her spacious lands;
And Antwerp shoots her glowing spire in air.

Yet have I seen no place by inland brook,
Hill top, or plain, or trim arcaded bowers,
That carries age so nobly in its look
As Oxford with the sun upon her towers."

Like feelings shew themselves in the poem where he contrasts Oxford and Cambridge; and again in the commencement of the lines to G. S. S.

"Dear friend! I have a dread and glorious home,
Just where two inland rivers gently meet,
And the young Cherwell's haunted waters come,
Isis, their queen, to greet."

In the winter after his matriculation he was a candidate at the examination for Balliol scholarships, which have long been amongst the blue ribbons of academical life. The victors were Mr. Wickens, of the Chancery bar, and Dr. Holden, master of Durham School. He remained at Balliol till the conclusion of 1834, when he was elected Scholar of University College, in company with Mr. Donkin (now

the distinguished Professor of Astronomy in the University.)

From his early predilection for poetry his friends naturally expected that he would turn his attention to the poetical prizes which are open to undergraduates. I do not think that his acquirements as a scholar, taking the word in its limited sense, were sufficient to have given him any chance for the Latin Verse Prize, and he made no attempt in that way. Until his last year the subjects given out for the English poem had never taken his fancy; but when "The Knights of St. John" was chosen, in 1835, he seized upon it with his characteristic avidity, and began to form his plan the very day that the subject came out. The prize was not to be decided until the summer of 1836, and he had put his name down on the list of candidates for public examination in the Easter Term of that year. Before the schools opened, however, he was so severely attacked by influenza as

to make it necessary for him to withdraw his name, and retire into the country, which he did, leaving his poem still *sub judice*. In the course of a few weeks he received the news of his victory, but was still so unwell that he could not attend on Professor Keble to hear his criticisms on the composition; and I had the good fortune to go in his stead. Mr. Keble thought the poem remarkably elegant and highly polished; and I was afterwards informed by the late Mr. Hussey, who was an *ex officio* judge, that of the thirty-seven poems sent in, none came into competition with the winner. Another critic characterized it as a poem *sui generis*, and unlike the successful Newdigates of other years. This was observable in the commencement and conclusion, the latter of which I subjoin.

“Farewell, then, Gentle Warriors! once again

’Tis meet to raise the faintly-dying strain:

’Twas meet that when the pageantry of death

Hung round the hero’s tomb the laurel wreath,

'Twas meet his Minstrel Boy should linger near
To weep alone upon his master's bier.

And often to the warrior's silent cell
From a far land soft dreams shall come to dwell ;
While busy fancy marks with curious eye
Tall helmet-plumes and bannered lines glance
by,

Or feeds her meditative soul from springs
Of sunny thoughts and deep imaginings.
Oh ! still in memory's clear pathetic light
Shall live those dream-like forms for ever bright.
On ! while undying spirits still must crave
A better, nobler land beyond the grave ;
In lowliness the feeling heart shall come
And watch by the crusader's marble tomb,
Till the weird silence of the cloistered air
Steal o'er the soul and charm it into prayer,
And the strong-glancing eagle eye of Faith
See far into the tranquil things of Death."

It was recited in the Theatre in the usual manner, and amid much applause.

In the autumn after this success (1836) he met with a severe disappointment in failing to obtain a First Class at the Public Examination. It was understood

that the decision against him was not unanimous, but the statute precludes the examiners from saying how they vote. From all that I could learn Frederic had eclipsed most of his competitors in some of the higher papers, but had neglected what was then called the *hoplitical* part of the work; in short, he had taken up some parts of his books *at a shot*. The four examiners have since been remarkable in very different ways. They were Canon Oakeley; the Rev. H. B. Wilson, one of the authors of *Essays and Reviews*; the present Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Claughton; and Sir Travers Twiss, Queen's Advocate. I may add that there were names in that class which might well have reconciled him to his position in after time.*

This mishap was closely followed by

* The two members for the University, Mr. Gathorne Hardy and Mr. Mowbray (at that time Mr. Cornish), and also Mr. Mellish, the Barrister, were in the same Class with F. W. F.

another. He was defeated in a contest for a Fellowship in his own college; the successful candidate being Mr. Donkin, who had already attained the highest honours both in the classical and mathematical schools.

In order to digest this double disappointment he accompanied me to Germany at the close of 1836. We remained a few weeks with some English friends at Mannheim; and a day was given to Heidelberg, a record of which remains in his first poetical volume. At this time he was still suffering from weak health. At the beginning of Lent Term in 1837 we returned in order that he might be in time to stand for another Fellowship which was vacant in University College. We were travelling with a Belgian passport only, and the Dutch authorities at Nimeguen intimated that they must detain us until the English ambassador at the Hague wrote to set us free. This might have been fatal to his views, for

the day of election was close at hand; but we succeeded at last in persuading the commandant to let us go, just as the boat was getting up her steam for departure.

On this second occasion he was successful, and became a Fellow at the age of twenty-two; this event being closely followed by another triumph which gave him great pleasure. He carried off the Johnson Divinity Scholarship, open to all Bachelors, and for which there was considerable competition. No second name was mentioned; but it was understood that the *honores proximi* belonged to Mr. Utterton of Oriel, now Archdeacon of Surrey. Dr. Newman was one of the examiners.

This was destined to be his last academic laurel, though he wrote once for the Ellerton Theological Essay, and once for the Chancellor's English Essay. The Theological subject was "The Character of John the Baptist." My brother's essay

was ingenious enough, but I always told him it would fail, because it was too much like a sketch. Had it been properly *filled in*, it would have formed a volume rather than a pamphlet, and thus have been much too long for an academical prize. The opinions of the two judges on this composition afford a curious proof of the value of comparative criticism. I saw the private notes of each, and whilst one had written "highly original" opposite Frederic's motto, the other had characterized the essay as "fanciful and conceited." President Routh was the first of the two inquisitors; the second was the late Professor Faussett.

The subject of the Chancellor's prize pleased him so well that to write upon it was really a labour of love. It was on "the Difference of the Classical and the Romantic Style:" but he was again disappointed. Mr. Bernard of Exeter was the victor, and his subsequent reputation

as a writer may well account for the success of his maiden effort. He vanquished other competitors on that occasion whose names stood high in academical repute.

During his undergraduateship Frederic was a member of the Oxford University Debating Society, at that time in great fame, and it probably occupied more of his attention than was consistent with hard reading for his degree. I only heard him speak once and I thought he acquitted himself very well, notwithstanding the ability of his compeers, for Sir Roundell Palmer, Mr. Lowe, Mr. Cardwell, and Archbishop Tait, were amongst the speakers of that day. He also gave up some of his time to the establishment of an Oxford University Magazine; which only lived through three numbers, though it was certainly a publication of some literary merit. This book has long been out of print, and a number of it now would be a curiosity. Amongst his con-

tributions was one on "The Christian Year;" and one upon "Philip Van Artevelde," which he undertook with the greater relish from the fact of Mr. Taylor's father being a very intimate friend of our family. There was also a paper entitled "Crummack Water;" and some very touching verses on "The Death of Charles Lamb," which I think have been reprinted. He likewise inserted an article on Harrow School, full of his own recollections of Herga, and ending with a very graceful tribute to his old preceptor, Dr. Longley, in which I remember his quoting some lines from the fifth Satire of Persius.

"Me tibi supposui : teneros tu suscipis annos
Socratico, Cornute, sinu."

κ τ λ

Utterly forgotten as the magazine is now, there were papers in it by youths who have since risen to high distinction in political life.

One of the great advantages of an

University education is supposed to lie in the facility which it gives for the formation of friendships. This was certainly realized in the case of my brother; and it is remarkable that he was ever attracted towards young men of mark and likelihood among his compeers, whether belonging to Oxford or Cambridge. I need only notice the names of those to whom some of his separate poems are addressed: for example, Lord John Manners; the Rev. T. L. Claughton, now Bishop of Rochester; Sir Benjamin Brodie; Mr. Beresford Hope; and the Rev. T. Whytehead, who died at the Waimati in New Zealand. Bishop Claughton, of Colombo, and Dean Stanley were his co-fellows, and both were his intimate friends. Others there are likewise, now distinguished in Parliament, who were guests of his after he was established in his Fellowship. But the chosen associate of his youth, his nearest and dearest friend, was a member of his

own university, two years his senior in standing, whose academical career has hardly a parallel in point of celebrity, and who is now among the foremost public men of his day. The two were divided in after life by the waves of time and circumstance, but they met once more before the scene closed, and the friends exchanged farewells as my brother lay on his deathbed.

Companionship like this naturally exercised the best influence on his mind, yet I think it was at Harrow that his religious character first began to unfold itself. I have his copy of Jeremy Taylor's "Sermons for the Year," in which many are marked with the date at which they were read. This was very soon after his matriculation at Balliol, and it gave good augury for the future. I believe that he passed, by the blessing of God, through the ordeal of an university life without any cause for that regret which early years so often bequeath to others. It

is my firm persuasion, and I have good reason for saying so, that the purity of his life was without soil or blemish. *Soli Deo gloria.*

In 1839, Mr. Wordsworth, with whom Frederic had become acquainted at Ambleside, came to Oxford to receive his doctor's degree. Upon that occasion, the late John Wordsworth, Esq., his nephew, was Frederic's guest, and we were fortunate enough to see a good deal of the poet during his brief visit. There were some circumstances which made the ceremonial more attractive than usual; for it was a grand commemoration, as it was then called, and Sir John Herschel was one of those who were associated with Wordsworth; whilst the English prize poem was recited by Mr. Ruskin, then heard of for the first time. One party I remember with especial pleasure. The great poet came to breakfast with my brother on the morning of his departure, when Mr. Hamilton, now Bishop of Salis-

bury, was a guest, and also Chevalier Bunsen, the Prussian ambassador. Mr. Wordsworth talked, without any restraint, on literary subjects; and read, or rather recited, his verses on "Yarrow Unvisited," the poem fixed upon by the wishes of the company. It was a morning of great enjoyment, such as could hardly be expected to occur again.

Mr. Wordsworth always distinguished my brother by much kind attention. When he settled on his country living, the poet paid him a visit; and it was then, I think, that he presented him with a beautiful copy of the *Excursion*, with an autograph inscription on the fly leaf, "To the Rev. Frederic Faber, as a token of sincere regard, from William Wordsworth." This volume is now in my possession, and also the letter from Rydal which Mr. W. addressed to Frederic on reaching home. This was also in his own handwriting; a thing by no means common.

In the summer of 1840 Frederic ceased to reside in College, and took up his quarters entirely in the house of the late Matthew Harrison, Esq., of Ambleside, in order to superintend the education of his eldest son. In 1837 he had been ordained deacon in Ripon Cathedral by his old master, Dr. Longley: and two years afterwards he was admitted into priest's orders on Trinity Sunday, 1839, in Christ Church Cathedral, by Bishop Bagot. He never took any regular parochial duty, but assisted the clergyman of Ambleside, where his talents as a preacher soon developed themselves. About this time he brought out at intervals a number of tracts on Church matters; well written, but bearing marks of the ardency and eagerness which at that time were his characteristics. He published also a few occasional sermons, one of which was entitled "Rushbearing Sunday," preached on a particular Sunday in the year when the people in the Westmoreland valleys

are accustomed to bring rushes to the church, and strew the floor with them; a circumstance which no doubt caught his fancy, always on the alert to discover any trace of poetry amongst the customs of the peasantry. It was also in the summer of 1840 that he first brought out a volume of poetry, which he named "The Cherwell Water Lily, and other Poems." A very large proportion of this volume had reference to lake and mountain scenery; which at that time seemed to be the passion of his life. He had an unbounded admiration of Wordsworth, a feeling indeed which he shared with multitudes, but which was not altogether fortunate for him when he began to compose, for it naturally led him into an endeavour to imitate the style of the great master, a thing "*periculosæ plenum aleæ*" for any youthful poet. There was enough, however, of originality, to ensure this volume the favourable reception which it met with. Amongst many very effective

pieces selection is not easy, but perhaps the gem of the book was "St. Mary's by Moonlight." In the first edition, he had introduced a concluding stanza, unfortunate certainly, because it carried the reader from the main topic to the feelings of the writer; but this he struck out in the later issue, and as it stands now it might be owned by any poet, however high his place may be. *Sit lector judex.*

"ST. MARY'S AT NIGHT.

I.

"Dear Mother! at whose angel-guarded shrine
I oft have waited for my daily Bread,
How full thou art of impulses divine
And memories deep and dread.

II.

"Steeped in the shades of night thou art unseen,
All save thy fretted tower and airy spire
That travels upward to yon blue serene,
Like a mighty altar-fire.

III.

“For wavy streams of moonlight creep and move
Through little arches and o’er sculpture rare,
So life-like, one might deem that angels love
To come and cluster there.

IV.

“Oh ! it is well that thou to us shouldst be
Like the mysterious bush, engirt with flame
Yet unconsumed, as she that gifted thee
With her high virgin name.

V.

“And like the Church that hath for ages stood
Within the world, and always been on fire,
Albeit her hidden scent, like cedar wood,
Smells sweetest on the pyre.

VI.

“The city sleeps around thee, save the few
That keep the vigil, with their spirits bare,
As Gideon’s fleece, to catch the cold fresh dew
That falls on midnight prayer.

VII.

“ Why doth thy lonely tower tell forth the time
When men nor heed, nor hear the warning sound?
Why waste the solemn music of thy chime
On hearts in slumber bound ?

VIII.

“ It is, because thou art a church, to tell
How fast the end of all things comes along,
And, though men hear thee not, thy voice doth
 swell
Each night more clear and strong :

IX.

“ Content the few that watch should fear, and feel
Secure their mother doth not, cannot sleep ;
And as they hear, the gracious dew doth steal
Into their soul more deep.

X.

“ Or some young heart that hath been kept awake
By chance, or by his guardian angel's skill,
Some serious thoughts into himself may take
From sounds so dread and still.

XI.

“If there be none to hear, no hymn of praise,
Or voice of prayer to join thy chant be given,
There is no sleep above, and thou mayst raise
Thy patient chimes to heaven.”

This is perhaps the fittest time to introduce part of a letter which I received from him soon after the publication of his volume. It refers to various criticisms which he had received, and which tell their own tale.

“Ambleside, Nov. 17, 1840.

“My dear F.

.....“Your poetical criticisms I am much delighted with—even while I agree with many of the objections. For there is scarce any objectionable poem which you point out which has not been among the favourite few of my correspondents. This is what I think tells best for the volume. I have by me eighteen or nineteen lists from different

people of what they like best, and scarce in *one* point do any two lists concur. This is as it should be. If a man is a real poet, all his modes germinate so many different admirers. The last verse of St. Mary's I *do* think weak;* but I do not object to its personality. Still I should not care to omit it. Obscurity is a difficult charge to enter upon. It is the least important fault; for one grows out of it naturally. It is youthful. Strong expressions towards male friends are matters of taste. I feel what they express to *me*. B. thinks a revival of chivalry in male friendships a characteristic of the rising generation, and a hopeful one. So he probably would not object to it. What I say of friendship in "First Love," and to which R. objects so much *æsthetically*, will probably keep me from it in future. XLI. has been in two lists as a favourite piece. The sonnet about

* This verse was omitted in the subsequent editions.

eloquence W. W. has said is the greatest *promise* there is. 33, e. g., is one of C.'s select ones.

“In fact, the degree of merit in the pieces ranges very extensively; and I often hear *enthusiastic* praise of things which I *scarce* admitted. You may rely upon it this is the best sign: and you see all your objections (to which I partially succumb) are such as belong not to *me* personally, but to *youth* universally; such as must inevitably adhere to all young publications, and the question is whether it has been well to publish young. Had I kept my MSS. I should have felt enthralled. As it is, I feel disenthralled, and at liberty to go my own gait and do better; so I don't repent. I write in a desperate hurry. For myself, I consider St. Mary's; the Holy Angels; Birthday, 1838; Thirlmere; Lake Party; Devoke Water; Heaven and Earth; Indoors and Out of Doors; Life a Stream; To a Little Boy; Richard's Tree; and the Preface,

the first class in the volume, with the *Life of the Living*, pressing hard, but not doing it.

“High winds, trees cracking, shiny glare of snowy hills : great relief after the yellow fogs of Michaelmas, Oxford. M.’s love. He has shot very strenuously *at* grouse, woodcocks, &c., *killed* one stray pigeon *sitting* on the dovecote.

“Yours affectionately,

“F. W. F.”

I mentioned his disposition to imitate Wordsworth, whether conscious or unconscious. But there are also traces of the manner of other poets. “The Wren of Rothay” reminds one of Cowper, and the conclusion of “Llynsyvaddon,” with its catalogue of names, resembles the diction of Scott.

“Llanthony lurks in Ewia’s vale
And Wye half clasps her Tintern pale,
And Usk is flowing every hour
By Ragland, Brecon, and Tretower.”

I do not think that his own claim to originality suffered by this; but it exhibits a feature of his character, and it was not confined to literary matters. In his earlier academic days he was intimate with a clergyman who lived near his friends in the country, the late Rev. W. W. Ewbank, whose death and burial among the rocks in the presence of Mount Sinai have been so touchingly depicted by a fellow traveller. This gentleman belonged entirely to what has been called the Evangelical Section of Theological belief. Frederic fell under its influence also, and the effect continued until his association with others who thought differently, and whose mental powers were sufficiently strong to have great effect upon a young and impulsive mind. He never looked back with anything of regret to his early associations, and there is no reason why he should; for in each case there was sterling goodness in his model; neither is he the first who has passed

from one phase of thought into the other.

1841 was mainly spent in travelling with his pupil. They passed through France into northern Italy, and down the Adriatic *en route* for Greece, which was the main object of their tour, though it was extended to Constantinople. Of this journey he left a record in the volume entitled "*Sights and Thoughts in Foreign Churches and among Foreign Peoples.*" It obtained considerable praise in one of the serials of the day, the writer of which observed that "Mr. Faber writes with a discursive and fanciful pen." The two epithets characterize the work very justly; but it must also be admitted that there is much of thoughtful writing in the volume, and those who take it up will find it difficult to lay it down, so much there is of attraction in the style. His description of the first approach to Venice may be quoted as a specimen of his poetical manner when engaged in the composition of prose.

“And there it was, a most visionary city, rising, as if by enchantment, out of the gentle-mannered Adriatic, the waveless Adriatic. One by one rose steeple, tower and dome, street and marble palace. They rose to our eyes slowly, as from the weedy deeps; and then they and their images wavered and floated like a dream upon the pale sunny sea. As we glided onward from Fusina in our gondola, the beautiful buildings, with their strange eastern architecture, seemed, like fairy ships, to totter, to steady themselves, and come to anchor one by one; and where the shadow was, and where the palace was, you scarce could tell. And there was San Marco, and there the Ducal Palace, and there the Bridge of Sighs; and the very shades of the Balbi, Foscari, Pisani, Bembi, seemed to hover about the winged lion of St. Mark. And all this, all, to the right and left, all was Venice; and it needed the sharp grating of the

gondola against the stair to bid us be sure it was not all a dream."

He gave some novelty to his book by the device of introducing a denizen of the Middle Ages, with whom the author holds conference upon various ecclesiastical topics. He then disappears, but is again summoned at intervals, and always for the same purpose. This made the volume less like the mere description of a common tour, whilst it enabled the author to broach subjects and to insinuate opinions which he could hardly have introduced in any other way. I remember a friend congratulating him on the happiness of the thought, and telling him that no such originality had been given to a book of travel since Lawrence Sterne published his "Sentimental Journey"!

In 1842 the Rectory of Elton, in Huntingdonshire, was offered to him by his college. He declined it in the first instance, but a visit to the place led him to accept it. Though the village stands

in one of the counties proscribed by Dr. Arnold, yet it is close enough upon Northamptonshire to borrow something of beauty from its neighbour, and my brother always described the scene as a pleasant one. The Nen, the "barge-laden wave" of Cowper, passes near the rectory, which is situated opposite to the place where once stood the Castle of Fotheringay. He might truly have said that his "lines had fallen in pleasant places."

1842 was marked by the issue of another volume of poetry, entitled "The Styrian Lake," which he told me was not received so well as the former had been. Yet I suspect that no impressions of either are to be had now. After my brother became a Roman Catholic he published a new edition of his various poems, which is now the only one to be met with. I tried in vain a short time ago to procure a copy of the original edition of the "Cherwell Water Lily." The second volume contains the "Dream

of King Cræsus," in which the well-known tale in Herodotus is beautifully told. The poem also on "The Burial of the last Palatine," to which allusion has already been made, is to be found there. I mentioned it as containing a proof how much his early boyhood was influenced by his father's connection with the Prince-Bishop of that day, and a brief quotation will shew the nature of his feelings.

"Hath not a sacred lamp gone out to-day
With ominous extinction? Can ye fill,
Wild men! the hallowed vases that ye spill,
And light our darkened shrines with purer ray?
Oh, where shall trust and love have fitting scope?
Our children will cry out for very dearth
Of grandeur, fortified upon the earth
As refuge meet for faith and holy hope."

And in the concluding stanza he recalls how often he had been a worshipper in the cathedral which now received the dust of the last of her magnificent prelates.

“At night upon the Minster I looked down ;
In all the streets, through dismal mist and rain,
The lights were twinkling ; and the mighty fane
Seemed over its seven subject hills to frown.
This thought a light on my old age will shine,
A grandeur, now no more on earth, touched me
With its last outskirts, for on bended knee
I oft was blessed by that last Palatine.”

It was in the summer of this year (1842) that my brother came from Westmoreland to see me, when I was lying ill with typhoid fever, in Magdalen College. I remember his entering my bed-room, and stooping to kiss me on the forehead. He remained in Oxford until I had nearly recovered.

After taking possession of his benefice he made a second journey abroad. Italy was this time the object, and especially Rome, which he had never seen. His letters on this tour were very numerous, and he soon began to write in Italian, which he acquired with great facility. They were full of the spirit of enjoyment ;

one in particular from Lecco, in which he declares that "Italy had adopted him," and that he feels "like a son of the soil." It was during the Papacy of Gregory XVI., who admitted him to an audience, and not without much effect on his mind ; though it seemed at a subsequent period that the spell had been broken, at all events for a time.

His two last publications were a poem entitled "Sir Lancelot," and a collection of shorter pieces, to which he gave the name of "The Rosary ;"* which latter, I believe, has since reappeared in a different form. "Sir Lancelot" cannot be called an epic, for it is a complete narrative, and not the fragment of a story. I do not think that its success was great, but it contained many beautiful passages, and the interest in the hero is well sustained ; the history being that of a knight tempted to commit murder, and followed by the

* In his Hymns, published by Richardson, it is called "The Life of our Lord."

author through all the phases of remorse, until he arrives at the conviction of perfect forgiveness.

In this volume there were some turns of expression which might lead the reader to think that the author was dissatisfied with his position in the English Church ; for the phrases in question do not appear so much to belong to the character in the story (which, of course, was cast in times long previous to the Reformation,) as to proceed from the *animus* of the writer himself. I explain it in this manner : the poem was published shortly after his return from his Roman tour, when his interview with the Pope was fresh in his memory. I recollect also that he wrote to me from Naples, full of wrath at the treatment Dr. Pusey experienced when he was excluded for a time from the University pulpit. So great indeed was his indignation on this matter that his language gave me some alarm, not being able to foresee what step might

possibly be taken by one so accustomed to yield to the impulse of present feeling. As I have remarked, this passed away ; and when he sat down at Elton, in the autumn of 1843, his relinquishment of the English Church was certainly not anticipated either by himself or his friends.

I mention this, because it was asserted in the House of Commons, and by a prominent member, that Frederic, before he quitted Oxford, was in reality a Roman Catholic, though pretending still to belong to the English Communion. This assertion could only have been made by one entirely ignorant of the character of my brother. He was about that time issuing tracts in which he impugns the doctrines held by the Roman Catholics ; and that he did this with perfect sincerity no man who ever knew him can entertain the smallest doubt ; for, as I have already said, he was transparency itself.

Again, when he took possession of Elton, he borrowed a considerable sum

from a relation, which he expended on his glebe house and church, knowing that his only means of repayment lay in the income of his benefice. To believe, then, that he was not sincere when he first went to Elton, would compel one to credit that he borrowed the money with the intention of disqualifying himself from the power of repayment; and that he spent it to the advantage of a community which he had predetermined to quit. That any one can believe this is hardly possible; excepting in desperate defence of some theory of his own—
θέσιν διαφυλάττων.

It has always been my own belief that at the precise *time* of his leaving our communion he was actuated by impulse. The account that he gave to one of his friends ran in this manner. He was called, he said, to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to a sick parishioner; when it occurred to him, and the conviction was irresistible, that he

was not a priest, and that the Holy Sacrament was nothing in his hands. I remember receiving a note from Dr. Pusey shortly afterwards, in which he says, "I cannot find that your brother has given any *reasons* for his conversion:" by which I suppose he meant any argumentative reasons; such, for example, as Dr. Newman has given in his "Apologia." Possibly he may have done this to other friends, but I cannot say that he did from my own knowledge.

In his "Foreign Churches and Peoples" there are two passages, one at page 148, and another at p. 365. The first of these refers to the *cultus* paid by the Latin Church to the Blessed Virgin; the other to the claim which the Church of a man's Baptism and Regeneration may be supposed to have on his fealty and love. He wrote these passages in perfect good faith: and no doubt it was in good faith that he took the final step; yet the book only

bears date two years previous to his secession.

I return to the narrative: but there is little left for me to tell.

When he came back to England at the end of 1843, he went to reside at Elton. Here he continued two years, when, as is well known, he was received into the Roman Communion by Bishop Wareing, at Northampton, in 1845. One of his last clerical actions whilst still with us was the performance of the service at my own marriage in August, 1845.

During his two years at Elton he worked indefatigably, and won the affections of his people in a manner peculiar to himself. I may say this with truth, for in that particular department of attraction I have rarely, if ever, met with his equal. It was the same in after years, and there are many, very many at this moment who cannot mention his name without tears of affection.

At this point of his story my own

intimate knowledge naturally terminates, though we were never parted in love. We met little in the earlier years which followed after he quitted us ; but towards the end the old intimacy was renewed, and never interrupted.

Those who knew him in youth will remember him as eminently handsome, and of a slight and lithe figure. Such he still was in 1845 ; but when he paid me a visit four years afterwards, all the *gracilis puer* had departed. The identity was gone ; and though nothing could mar the beauty of his countenance, yet his augmenting bulk prevented any recollection of "Faber of University." This increased as life went on, and was, perhaps connected with the disease which proved fatal to him at the age of forty-nine.

My cousin, C. W. Faber, visited him twice in July ; (Appendix A.) and my wife saw him not long before his death, when he put aside various articles as

memorials for my children ; but as things written at the time are usually more effective than such as are retraced by memory, I think it better to give in full the memorandum of her last visit (B). I was unable from weak health to go to the Oratory during these last days ; but the kindness of the fathers, to whom I feel most grateful, supplied us with constant bulletins. My last communication from him was in reply to a hope which I had expressed that he might still recover. His words in reply were, "There is no hope, and there never has been any." Then I heard that he had been soothed and gratified by a visit from Sir Roundell Palmer, of whom I have spoken already as the dearest friend of his Oxford days. The next message told me that he was no more.

APPENDIX A.

FROM C. W. FABER, ESQ., OF LINCOLN'S
INN.

“I saw him twice in the July preceding his death, but he was too weak to converse at any length; and his medical attendant cautioned me not to make my stay very long. He asked me various questions about my late father, and other members of his family. On one, I think the last occasion, he shewed me a letter from Cardinal Wiseman, which referred to his, Frederic's, eminent services to the Church. He said: ‘This is very kind, but no one knows better than I do that I have no merits of my own to rely on, and that my only hope and trust is in the sacrifice of my Saviour.’ These are, as nearly as I recollect, his words, but I did not take them down at the time, and I cannot answer for verbal accuracy, but they are certainly substantially correct.”

APPENDIX B.

FROM MRS. F. A. FABER.

“I found him reclining in an easy chair, wrapped in a dressing-gown, greatly oppressed apparently in his breathing. He received me with his usual kindness and affection, but was so distressed for breath that he was only able to speak a few words at a time. He said there were many things he wished to say to me if he could; and, as if fearful he might not be able, he began at once to say there were some little things he wished to send the children as memorials; and put into my hands some curious knives he had been in the habit of using, for the two boys, specifying two in particular that he should wish to be ‘little Harry’s.’ He then took up a silver watch and chain,

and said, 'I should like this to be Stanley's.' He added that it was the gift of a very dear friend, since dead, which had given it peculiar value in his eyes. He told me that he had seen S.'s school a few days before, when he had been driven to a place about a mile from Finchley, and had wished to go to see him for the last time; but that he could not stand the fatigue. He spoke to me a good deal about the boys, and their future prospects; but fearing to fatigue him, I only expressed my trust that a way would be opened for them. He looked so much revived as we talked together, that I could not help expressing a hope that even yet he might be spared to us; he had so often recovered from such alarming illnesses. But he said, 'My dear J., don't let yourself think so: recovery is utterly hopeless; it had gone on too long and too far before it was found out; and now dropsy has set in, and a few weeks, and more likely *days*,

will end it all.' And he shewed me his poor feet, frightfully swollen, and upon which he could not even bear a stocking; and told me that it was ascending so rapidly that if no pause occurred (which was sometimes the case in such disorders) the end must be very soon. He spoke of it all with the most perfect calmness, and as if he were speaking of some one else; but said the suffering *had been* very frightful for one or two nights. He expressed his earnest hope and desire that he might be kept patient and entirely acquiescing in his Father's will.

"I was so greatly shocked at the condition in which I found him that I could scarcely speak, indeed I *dared* not say much, lest I should break down and distress him.

"He then told me how he had selected a number of volumes of Natural History, 'to form the commencement of a library for dear E.' and gave me a letter for her enclosing a lock of his 'white hair,' and

told me it was his particular wish that she should use a gold watch, given him by a dear friend. 'She cannot have it till I am gone, because I promised to wear it so long as I lived; but when I am dead Father Philip will send it to E.'

"He then desired me to tell Frank how he loved him, and how he loved us all. He told me much of the great kindness of the Fathers of the Oratory to him, and how tender they had been, sitting up with him night after night; and pointed to the various contrivances for his comfort from many loving friends, and one he noticed especially, mentioning her by name with affectionate gratitude.

"I was only allowed an hour by the doctor, and Mr. Gordon told me when the time was up and I must say good bye. He kissed me very affectionately, and I kissed his hand several times, but could not find voice to speak. 'Darling J.,' he said, 'I have always loved you very dearly, very dearly.'

“It was like the bitterness of death to turn away from that room, knowing that I should most probably never look on his dear face again.”

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